The Progressive Review

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THIS IS ALL WELL AND GOOD, BUT WHEN DO WE CONCENTRATE ON DOMESTIC POLICY?
THIS IS OUR DOMESTIC POLICY!
CPS
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Deconstructing the United States

Thomas S. Martin

The lessons of the Gulf War, the S&L scandal, the deficit and similar debaucheries should be clear by now: the United States needs devolution, and the rest of the world will be better off when it happens here. The dismantling of big government at all levels, and the restoration of participatory democracy, would have a multitude of positive effects.

The American people would benefit, certainly; even Ronald Reagan thought so, in his quaint way. But everyone else stands to gain as well. A world with only one superpower is supremely dangerous: the potential for political and economic domination, environmental catastrophe, and cultural monotony/monopoly is frightening. The cold-blooded decision of one man in Washington can doom the Kurds to genocide; the signature of another at a Manhattan bank can wreck the economy of a third world nation. The earth today simply cannot sustain an alliance of politicians and capitalists as powerful as ours.

Many of America's founders thought much the same way. One of the great subterfuges of American history is the cover-up that surrounds the adoption of the United States Constitution. A clear majority of the people did not want it[1], and some of the leaders of

October weekend

The story of the October Surprise -- the apparent manipulation of the Iranian hostage deal for the benefit of the Reagan campaign -- is refusing to go away. PBS's *Frontline* devoted a program to it, the *New York Times* gave much of its op ed page to a key Carter administration official who says he now believes there was such a deal, the GAO has commenced a preliminary investigation, and the Iran-Contra independent counsel's office says "we can neither confirm nor deny" that it is looking into the matter.

Also paying attention is New York attorney Leonard Weinglass who two years ago talked to former hostages about bringing suit against those allegedly involved, but then dropped the matter. He'd prefer that Congress looked into it but told *In These Times*, "This issue should bring down the Bush presidency, but there isn't a spark of interest in the moribund Democratic Party, which lost the presidency as a result of this conspiracy." Weinglass pointed out that because most of the key players were not in office at the time, people like George Bush could be compelled to testify on the matter.

According to *ITT*, ex-hostage Moorehead Kennedy, who incidentally is a Manhattan GOP deputy district leader, says, "We've got to purge this." Kennedy, who runs an institute on ethics, points out two legal grounds for action: accessory or co-conspirator in a kidnapping and false imprisonment.

As Weinglass noted, the Democrats are pursuing this with a stunning lack of vigor. This may be due to the terminal torpor of the current party leadership, but it is well to keep in mind the possibility

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that more than a few members of Congress have been effectively blackmailed into silence. Activists pursuing the history of the secret government that invented and steered Iran-Contra report a sudden surreal disinterest by key Hill figures whenever they get too close to certain topics. History may show that our obsession for political ethics has played greatly into the hands of those responsible for creating what now appears to be the most corrupt government America has ever had.

One clue as to the Democrat's ultimate intentions will be the sort of treatment that Robert Gates gets when his nomination as CIA director is considered.

The name of Gates has surfaced in stories on the October Surprise. He is one of a handful of intelligence types who played key roles in both the Carter and the Bush administration. The question that has arisen is: did any of these carry-overs funnel information to the Reagan-Bush campaign concerning the Carter plans on the hostages?

Gates was assistant to deputy national security advisor David Aaron during the Carter administration. He then went on to become, in Aaron's words to the *Village Voice*, "a favorite of Bill Casey's." In his book *Veil*, Bob Woodward suggests that Gates was favored because of his willingness to "bend the rules."

William Odum was another intelligence official who made the switch. He's the man who was quoted by *USA Today* in the early stages of the Iraq disaster as saying, "The new technical and military realities do not invalidate the spirit of the Constitution. They do make the old formalities obsolete for most situations."

Still another, and perhaps most interesting was Donald Gregg, who is now ambassador to South Korea and whose name came up in connection with Iran-Contra and particularly Bush's role in it, long before allegations of his participation in the October Surprise surfaced.

Gregg was appointed to Carter's NSC in 1979. Gregg, although most NSC staffers didn't know it, had briefed Bush on his duties when -- under Nixon -- the latter took over the US Liason Office in Peking. When Reagan took over in 1981, he cleaned house at the NSC with one significant exception: Donald Gregg.

[For more on this and Jimmy Carter's interesting reaction to it, see the May 21 *Village Voice*]

In the slight mainstream coverage given so far, the focus has been on whether George Bush was in Paris on or about October 19, 1980, when the key deal-making meeting allegedly took place. It is important to keep in mind, however, that in a conspiracy -- as Winnie Mandela found out -- absence does not necessarily make the heart less culpable.

It would be interesting -- and perhaps critically important -- nonetheless to find out where the GOP candidate for vice president was on that crucial weekend a fortnight before the election. Given the amount of coverage given a presidential campaign, it is astounding that the media has not been more curious about this matter.

As this is written, Bush has said he wasn't in Paris and that is all he is going to say.

The public testimony so far is confusing and conflicting. Here is some of it as compiled by the Christic Institute and others:

- At the trial of David Brenneke, accused by the government of lying in another trial when he claimed that he saw William Casey and Donald Gregg at the Paris meetings, two Secret Service agents were called to the stand to prove that Bush was not in Paris, even though the point was not strictly germane to the case. The two agents, under cross examination, said they could not recall seeing Bush at all that weekend nor could they recall whether or not they were on duty. Furthermore, the government offered no documentary evidence on the matter.

Brenneke, a businessman who was one of the original sources of the October Surprise story, was acquitted of perjury. What is clear from reading the *Portland Oregonian* stories on the trial (and what is not clear at all in *Washington Post* references to the case) is that the jury simply did not believe the

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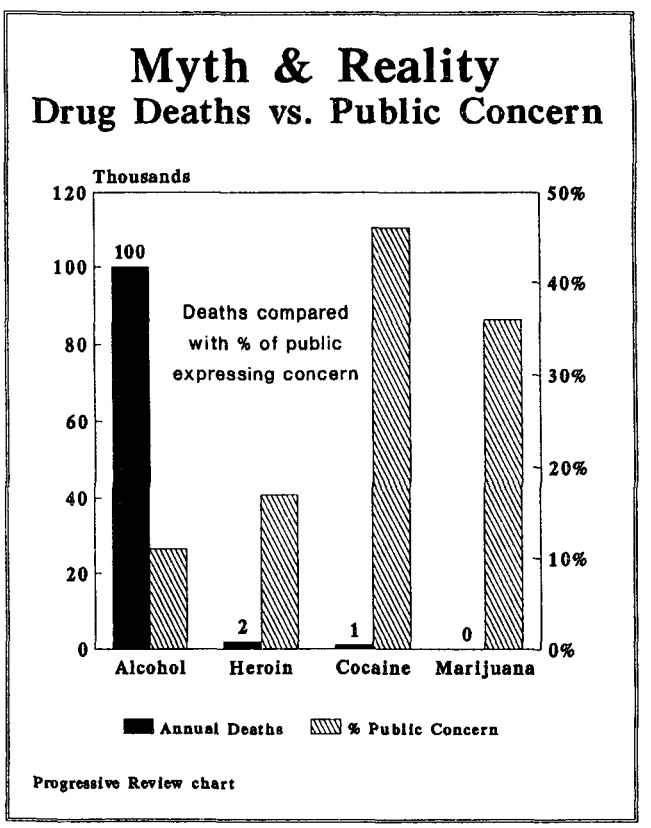
the Revolution feared it would undo their victory. They were right. The thirteen United States were much too large, they argued, to remain democratic under a centralized federal government. The President was too powerful. The Congress, if small enough to be manageable, would not accurately represent the diverse and scattered population. One region might dominate the others. The powers reserved to state and local authorities would eventually be undermined, because national leaders would brook no competition. History proved that small republics, when they became great empires, always degenerated into tyrannies. And most fundamentally, the "sovereignty of the people" would become a cruel joke. All these prophecies have come to pass.

Traditional American history is a record of the centripetal growth of federalism and capitalism. This is understandable, when we consider who publishes the textbooks and certifies the teachers. But a powerful centrifugal force is at work in American history too, and always has been. The thirteen colonies jealously guarded their autonomy, and managed to protect it a few years beyond the Revolution under the Articles of Confederation. Unfortunately, during the next eighty years the devolutionary tendency was linked with the foulest obscenity in our national record: the defense of slavery. As the doctrine of "states' rights," it was used even long after the Civil War to authorize racism and bigotry. Only now, as we move into our third century, can we begin to look at devolution as a constructive answer to the mess we are in.

Antecedents can be found, however, as far back as the 1920s. The movement called "regionalism" was inspired and developed by a host of prominent academics, including Frederick Jackson Turner, Lewis Mumford, and Howard Odum. Regionalism called for a pragmatic recognition of the fact that America is made up of widely



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government concerning Gregg and Casey, whose whereabouts could not be proved either. The case was not helped by the presentation of photographs allegedly showing Gregg at a Maryland beach that weekend, which unfortunately had the wrong type of clouds for that day at that location.

Brenneke is considered a questionable source even by some who believe the October Surprise took place, but it is important to remember that it was the Reagan administration that pressed the case against him and still came out with egg on its face.

- The PBS *Frontline* piece cited "heavily censored Secret Service documents" that showed Bush's secret service detail went to a suburban country club that weekend. The records did not indicate who was with them.
- The conservative *Washington Times* on May 8 reported that "Reagan-Bush campaign records, independently confirmed by the *Washington Times*" prove that Bush spent Sunday, October 19 at home: "The Secret Service says he awoke about 6:30 am, had lunch at his Washington home and spent the day there preparing [a speech]. He returned home from the speech about 9 pm."
- Meanwhile, on the same day as the Times story, a columnist for another conservative publication, the *Wall Street Journal*, had Bush having lunch with Justice Potter Stewart and his wife at the Supreme Court on October 19. Although both stories were clearly leaked by administration sources, they couldn't even agree on where Bush had lunch.
- To add further mystery, the *Napa Sentinel* in California reported on May 3 that a US Navy pilot had come forward to claim that he flew Bush to Paris on October 19. US Navy Captain Gunther Russbacker claims he flew a BAC-111, reconfigured to carry extra fuel, from Andrews Air Force Base to France on the afternoon of October 19, 1980. Also on the flight, he says, were other figures mentioned in the case (including Brenneke), as well as some Secret Service agents. According to this account, Bush stayed in Paris only a few hours and was flown back in an SR-71, a high

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speed reconnaissance plane which was refueled over the Atlantic. The plane allegedly landed at McGuire Air Force Base at 2 am on October 20. Russbacker is currently being held on Terminal Island, awaiting appeal on charges of misuse of government funds and property. He was in naval intelligence and had worked with the CIA. He claims he decided to come forward out of concern for his own safety, after what he believes may have been an attempt on his life occurred shortly after an announcement of a congressional investigation into the October Surprise allegations.

This story, however, conflicts with Brenneke's claim that he doesn't recall seeing Bush, who would be hard to miss on such a flight.

As far as anyone can prove, the GOP vice presidential candidate simply disappeared for nearly twenty-four hours at the climax of the 1980 campaign, a matter worthy of considerably more journalistic curiosity than has been so far evident. It is important to remember, however, that the presence of George Bush in Paris is in no way critical to the gist of the story. As Henrik Hertzberg wrote in the *New Republic* that even if "the only culprit was William Casey... the magnitude of the iniquity would dwarf all other scandals of American political history combined." And he added, "The post-Watergate consolation -- 'the system works' -- would not be available this time."

Gary Sick, Carter's security council advisor on the hostage matter, remains ambivalent about Bush's direct participation. But he told *Frontline:* "I think it was something like 15 people that claim personal knowledge that this [deal] happened... There are a very large number of very respectable people who really do believe that this happened... I finally, I guess, passed a point where it was harder to explain the people who were supposedly all lying to me for reasons that I couldn't understand than it was to believe that something in fact happened."

The easy way out for reporters faced with the murk of a story like this is to dismiss sources as

differing zones, each with its own interests, requirements and culture. The movement picked up support during the New Deal years, when a vastly swollen federal government began to impose Procrustean regulations on a diverse people. It did not survive World War II, however. For several decades, big business and its minions inside the Beltway enjoyed a free hand in the McDonaldizing of America. They did not entirely succeed, however. Ronald Reagan's "new federalism," however misguided and hypocritical, was a reflection of the old, libertarian centrifugal tendency. But today the genuine focus of American devolution lies elsewhere.

A fundamentally new attitude toward the American future has begun to emerge in the last ten years. It is nonpartisan, recognizing that traditional politics is no more than window dressing for the power elite. It is no fad: the movement is fully articulated, with a broad range of strategies and tactics. Its political theory is decentralist, democratic and egalitarian -- one might almost say Jeffersonian. Its economics is based on the steady-state, human-scale principles developed by E. F. Schumacher, Herman Daly, Leopold Kohr and Marshall Sahlins. Ecological humanism and other values commonly known as "green" are central to its ideology. Nearly all devolutionists, whatever they call themselves, agree on one thing: *scale* is fundamental, ideology is secondary.

Once we reach a consensus that some kind of American devolution is necessary, what form will it take? A number of interesting alternatives have been proposed in recent years. Probably none of them is the "right" answer, but they may all contribute to it. The sort of ethnic nationalism that is now deconstructing the Soviet Union will not work here, except in the special case of the Indians. Many tribes are now seeking various forms of autonomy, and the rest of us would be well advised to watch and learn. Clearly the reservations cannot simply be converted into mini-nations; Native American autonomy will have to be at least partially non-territorial. If the movement is successful we will all have a useful model for a world in which nations can exist without well-defined boundaries. The Indian approach is already influencing the most vigorous American devolutionary effort, bioregionalism.

First popularized during the 1980s by the Planet Drum organization, "bioregionalism" calls for a recognition of the natural domains into which North America divides itself: watersheds, climate zones, areas of ecological unity. Its proponents believe that harmony with nature as well as true democracy can best be achieved within these relatively small regions. By trying to consume products from our own bioregion, by understanding and protecting its ecology, and by emphasizing community over politics, we can recapture the "sense of place" that most Americans lost more than a century ago. It is already clear that our state and county lines are irrelevant, even harmful, and that our cities are well beyond the point of sustainability. A bioregional continent would restore economic, social and cultural sanity. Best of all, it would render impossible most of the destructive military and industrial practices that now threaten all life on Earth: small communities with steady-state economies simply can't mobilize enough resources to threaten anyone else. At the same time, bioregions would not be isolated. Information, culture and ideas could flow easily across their permeable borders.

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Unfortunately, the bioregional vision is "utopian" in Marx's sense of the word -- as wonderful as it sounds, no one really knows how to get from here to there. Some adherents argue pointlessly over where the "boundaries" of the bioregions are -- a debate that proves they are still mired in the old paradigm.

Bioregional congresses, which meet annually in many parts of the country, are working on that problem. So far their efforts are primarily educational, not activist. Bioregionalists quite properly avoid political solutions. The movement is and must be ultra-partisan and flexible. Events of the last decade seem to be playing into its hands. As the federal government becomes increasingly irrelevant and expensive, states and communities are being forced to look within themselves for solutions to their problems. For half a century Washington disguised the depths of societal dysfunction by throwing money at it, but now the money is drying up. Economic conversion from an industrial to a service economy, coupled with the computer revolution, strengthens the centrifugal tendency at the expense of the centripetal. The sheer volume of available information is, ironically, backfiring on its creators: the American people have lost faith in the system, because they know too much about it now. The recent Gulf wargasm was a temporary sidetracking; already Americans are questioning its results. Above all, everyone knows that the environmental crisis is the product of large-scale, not small-scale, economic and political forces. All these trends will help create a twenty-first century America that is, at least in part, bioregional.

One of the most insightful books of recent times, Joel Garreau's *The Nine Nations of North America*, demonstrates beyond argument that our political boundaries make no sense. Borrowing from the regionalism of the 1920s, Garreau shows that the real "nations" underlying the arbitrary "states" of Canada, the U.S. and Mexico have always been the prime determinants of our lives and culture. Priorities and values differ so widely from nation to nation that the uniform policies of the federal and state governments are worse than irrelevant: they are destructive. Colorado, for example, is obviously two quite distinct "places," divided by the Front Range; yet a single government in Denver tries to manage both. Fortunately, as Garreau points out, we are beginning to see that "our values are separable from our regimes. We can preserve what is important to us, no matter what violence is done to the federal system, and the sooner we recognize that, the more confident of our future we'll be."

No survey of devolutionary schemes would be complete without Frank Bryan and John McClaughry's remarkable *The Vermont Papers: Recreating Democracy on a Human Scale.* This rational plan for replacing state and county governments with "shires" is not likely to be adopted any time soon, in Vermont or elsewhere; but it does answer many of the practical questions about devolution. More important, it demonstrates in a real-world context that Kropotkin was right about centralized governments: they exist for the benefit of the leaders, not the people, and they survive by stripping us of our sense of community and making us dependent on them instead of on each other. Still the question remains: how do we get there from here?

A constitutional convention has often been proposed by activists on the right and the left. The establishment and its media puppets prefer to suppress the idea, just as they suppressed opponents of the

October...

"unreliable" and "paranoids," especially when the pack-leading *Washington Post* pooh-poohs the affair in its Outlook section. Bani-Sadr, the ex-Iranian president, has been given this dismissive treatment despite that fact that Jimmy Carter now reveals that he was working so closely with Bani-Sadr on the hostage crisis that they had agreed on secret signals to use in their public statements during the negotiations.

The media often seeks refuge in the argument that there "is no smoking gun," thus it is presumed to follow that the story is not worth chasing.

Henry Thoreau had a better metaphor. He said some circumstantial evidence is very strong, as when you find a trout in your milk. There's a trout floating in the milk of this story. The Democrats are apparently too scared or too dumb to care. It remains to be seen whether the media will find out where Casey, Gregg and Bush were on the October weekend that may have changed the whole course of American history.

Twenty-five years ago this summer, your editor started publishing an alternative neighborhood newspaper called *The Capitol East Gazette.* Through the processes of journalistic meiosis and mitosis, the *CEG* evolved into the *DC Gazette* and, ultimately, into the journal you now hold in your hand. While it is traditional for publications to celebrate such occasions with lengthy retrospectives and expensive festivities, we -- in the immortal words of the movie *Airport* -- don't have time for that now. Further examination of the Entropic Empire beckons and those wishing to learn the inner meaning of the past 298 issues will have to be content with the revelation that, like a teenager getting into trouble, your editor couldn't think of anything better to do.

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Weather Report

■

If you're looking for the roots of the October Surprise and Iran-Contra, it may help to recall that during his administration, Jimmy Carter purged the CIA of hundreds of its agents, and particularly those in covert operations. In his interview with the *Village Voice*, Jimmy Carter presents this picture:

"We tried to clean up the CIA. It had been shot through with people that were later involved in the Iran-Contra affair; people like Secord and so forth had been in the CIA when I took over. [I put Stansfield Turner] in there to run the thing and to get it cleaned out. He finally discharged or required about 600 or 700 to retire, and those people were quite disgruntled. We knew that some of the former CIA officials were loyal to Bush... We were worried about revelations of what we were doing..."

■

A paper presented at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science argues that Sigmund Freud made exaggerated claims, reached unsupported conclusions, and ignored basic scientific principles. One of Freud's major works involved the case studies of treatment of six patients. But says Professor Frank J. Sulloway of MIT, recent research has shown that "one involved a patient who fled therapy in disgust, two actually were not treated by Freud and another involved no real therapy." One of Freud's allegedly cured patients was interviewed years later and the cure was found to be, according to Sulloway, "a complete misrepresentation of the facts."

The case histories, he said, "are rampant with censorship, distortions, highly dubious reconstructions and exaggerated clinical claims." Freudian psychology, he added, "is not a science. It's like a religion."

■

US News & World Report says that primatologists and zoo keepers are discovering that they can reduce child abuse among apes by

present Constitution two centuries ago. Presumably they would support the idea if it promised to increase rather then diminish their power. Moreover, the authors of the Constitution never expected it to stand unaltered for centuries.

Some delegates to the 1787 convention walked out before the work was finished. "Our powers were explicit, and confined to the *sole and express purpose of revising the articles of confederation,*" wrote John Lansing and Robert Yates. Other revolutionary leaders, like Patrick Henry, "smelt a rat" and refused to attend at all.

The Constitution still stands between us and fascism, but it is not Holy Writ. We must be willing to change it when necessary. Its vaunted adaptability is one of the great myths of American culture. It was designed for a small, peaceful, agricultural country on the edge of a wilderness, and to assert that it is adequate for today's United States is like believing that a few loaves and fishes can feed five thousand. There is, of course, one great danger in calling a constitutional convention: the establishment, instead of the people, may control it, and we may end up with something even worse than the present system.

Grassroot movements are probably the best method, though by definition we can't plan them. More of these are succeeding, in more places, than the establishment would like us to know. In a few areas alternative currencies have been established, backed by local resources. Abandoned by the police, people in urban poverty pockets have banded together to destroy crack houses. Informal mediation is taking on many disputes that formerly would have gone to court. Neighborhood associations, food co-ops, letter-writing campaigns, and direct actions of all kinds should be encouraged. The goals are less important than the process. The establishment has spent two hundred years and a mountain of money to convince us that a few individuals can't make a difference. They can. A handful of letters is sometimes enough to sway a state legislator's vote or change a corporation's policy. The IRS would grind to a screeching halt if only five percent of us refused to pay up. Of course, a small movement can only change the details, not the fundamentals; but it can learn invaluable techniques that can be applied on a larger scale when the inevitable gridlock of late capitalism hits us. In the final analysis, the devolution of political authority in this country is coming, whether anyone consciously works for it or not. The system is toppling, and great will be its fall. The Soviet people, in spite of centuries of oppression, did not hesitate to seize the rudder when the time came to deconstruct their imperial state. Will Americans display the same courage?

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[1] See Howard Zinn's *People's History of the United States* (Chapter 5) for a general account; also Staughton Lynd's *Anti-Federalism in Dutchess County, New York* and *Class Conflict, Slavery and the Constitution.* Also Sidney Lens's *Radicalism in America.*

One change that has occurred here over the past 25 years is that we now use the summer to stop publishing rather than to start. Following our annual estivation, we will be back in the fall for what we hope will be the penultimate year of the Reagan-Bush era.

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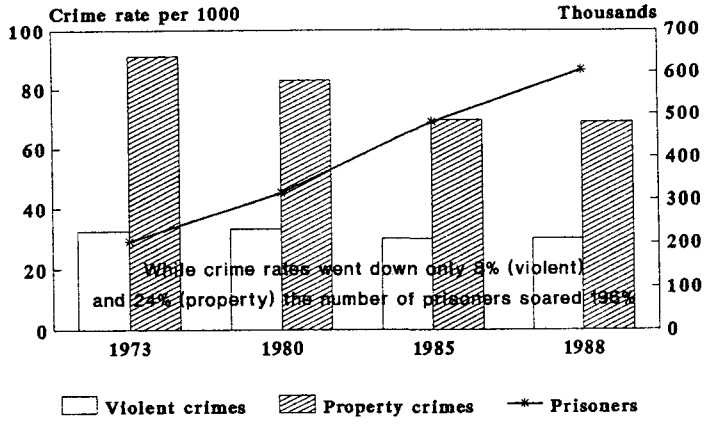
Locking 'Em Up
The Results



US Dept of Justice data

Affirmative action: it worked for whites

Paul Rockwell

My first heated argument over affirmative action took place more than 20 years ago at a teach-in about the war in Vietnam. The debate was not over minority programs, but about white college students who were getting draft deferments during that unpopular war. Black and brown kids from working-class neighborhoods were being sent to fight abroad, some to die, while primarily white college youth were building their careers through affirmative action, known then as the college draft deferment. Many who oppose affirmative action today, such as Defense Secretary Richard Cheney, were beneficiaries of draft deferments at that time.

In fact, minority programs make up only a small portion of American preferential policies. Tax breaks for corporations, subsidies for homebuyers, mass transit subsidies for the white suburbs, bank bailouts for bank executives, selective allotments for immigrants and refugees, price supports for corporate farmers, are all shot through with considerations of need and preference. Special considerations may be valid or invalid, but preference for those perceived to be in need is a basic concept of American society.

In the last fifty years of social engineering, the vast majority of direct beneficiaries of affirmative action policies have not been minorities, but white males. These policies were not invented by civil rights leaders or feminists. Under Franklin Roosevelt, whom most white Americans revere, the New Deal embarked upon a massive affirmative action approach to social crisis. With the critical exception of segregation, the social problems of America -- unemployment, poverty of senior citizens, farmers needing price supports -- were approached through planned engineering. There were timetables, managerial quotas, administrators who checked compliance, details and follow-through. There was a determination to make bailouts and subsidies work.

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providing more livable quarters, involving the extended family in child care, and exposing inexperienced mothers to good mothers in action. Zoo keepers used to raise ape babies in nurseries but "scientists began to notice that primates raised in this manner turned out to be lousy parents."

■

Estimates of the cost of the Washington parade to celebrate the Iraqi Massacre were up to $12 million by early June and still rising. This is the same figure the US Institute for Peace was seeking for its annual budget. Bush cut it to less than $9 million, presumably so he'd have more money for wars and subsequent parades.

■

You may recall us telling you about those Soviet satellite images taken in September that showed Kuwait amazingly short of Iraqi troops. ABC bought the shots hoping they would reveal the Iraqis in a massive formation. But the experts hired by ABC could find none of the 265,000 Iraqi troops that the administration claimed were threatening Saudi Arabia.

ABC didn't run the shots, and except for a brief mention in *Newsweek,* the press largely ignored the story. An exception was Jean Heller, of the *St. Petersburg Times,* who kept on the case even in the face of Pentagon denial.

In a recent issue of *Washington Journalism Review,* Heller admits the Soviet shots were inferior to American satellite imagery, but adds: "The Soviet satellite clearly showed evidence of the US troops in Saudi Arabia, and our analysts felt confident the pictures they examined were good enough to provide evidence of 265,000 troops. They couldn't find such evidence. They pretty much dismissed all possible explanations for the discrepancy except for one: misrepresentation or error by the US government."

■

Don't jump to any Democratic candidate until you've checked out Senator Tom Harkin. Harkin, who is doing some soundings, has an excellent voting record, is the only

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Democrat to be elected twice from Iowa, and -- unlike some of the other candidates -- speaks American. He's the best we've seen so far and his Truman-style populism and plain speech might just catch on.

■

The Campaign Research Center is a major new addition to the Washington public interest scene. In its small offices on Vermont Avenue is a database of contributions to federal campaigns that can be fed into software to produce the information and the charts that make it meaningful. We were recently given a demonstration that was... Well, let's describe it:

We gave CRC executive director Gary Schmitz the name of a prominent donor to campaigns and within seconds, the computer had generated a list of all his contributions for years back.

Then the name of the sleaziest senator anyone could think of was fed into the computer and we not only quickly received a list of contributions from an industry he is known to favor but a chart that showed the dates of the payments and amounts. This is important, because many contributions are keyed not to campaigns but to specific legislation and the program makes correlating the connection extremely simple.

Here are just a few of the things the CRC has come up with to date:

■ Officials of 20 failing S&Ls gave over a half million dollars to politicians and PACs even as they were going down the tubes. Biggest recipients: Sen. Lloyd Bentsen and George Bush.

■ Ex-S&L duke Charles Keating, his son, two business associates and their spouses gave a total of $14,000 to Sen. Paula Hawkins on one day. Hawkins is chair of a key committee overseeing the S&L committee.

■ CRC tracked the money given by the auto industry to senators who voted with business on a Clean Air Act amendment and the contributions of the tobacco industry to House Tobacco and Peanut Subcommittee members.

■ GE PAC gave $63,000 to House members who came from

The Marshall Plan after the war, a plan that provided billions of dollars for training and jobs, was a massive affirmative action program for Europe. Former enemies got free training programs in Europe that were denied African-Americans at home. The GI Bill was affirmative action for veterans.

White Americans loved the New Deal, but we tend to forget that the New and Fair Deals were carried out within the limits of segregation. The New Deal concepts became unpopular only when they were applied to the crisis of black poverty and black unemployment. And affirmative action became a dirty word only after people of color became beneficiaries of social engineering. It was not affirmative action, but the *extension* of affirmative action to minorities, that caused the backlash.

There is a normal tendency to overlook the social props and the network of special benefits on which we and our families depend. The late Mitch Snyder, an advocate for the homeless (one quarter of whom were vets), once gave an address to an affluent audience. He asked members of the audience who lived in federally subsidized housing to raise their hands. Nobody raised a hand. Then he asked homeowners to identify themselves. Almost everyone raised a hand, after which he pointed out that homeowners *are* subsidized. The Treasury gives up $46 billion a year for homeowner deductions in a system that predominantly benefits people who earn more than $50,000 a year. That's affirmative action, affirmative action for realtors, banks and for middle-class, and largely white, buyers with small savings. Tenants and renters never get that break, though they get to pay taxes and share the burden of the program.

Tax breaks for homebuyers may not be wrong. That is not the issue. What is wrong is the smug psychology of the David Dukes, the George Wills, the George Bushes, who take advantage of all kinds of breaks for themselves while denying affirmative action for the most oppressed members of society. The bailout for a select body of mismanaged S&Ls was first announced the same month that the Rehnquist Court struck down small set-aside contracts for qualified black businesses in the heart of the old Confederacy. There is little outcry about the qualifications of the bank executives who squandered billions. The white male bankers got their affirmative action on demand. The Bank of New England, Continental Illinois, and other banks considered "too big to fail" received special treatment. In stark contrast the small Harlem Freedom National Bank, the only black-owned commercial bank in New York City -- where dozens of charities kept their money -- was closed by federal regulators, even without the normal conservatorship prior to liquidation.

People for the American Way recently studied the pattern of George Bush's judicial nominations during the first two years of his term. 93% of his first 69 nominees were white. 88% were male. 64% were at least half-millionaires and more than a third were millionaires. 38% of the nominees belonged to clubs that excluded women and people of color. A 100% white-male country club is a pretty big quota for someone who opposes quotas.

Affirmative action is already part of the fabric of American life. In accepting social programs for our families and children, we are all bound together in a vast network of affirmative action, mutual support systems we take for granted. It is hypocritical, profoundly wrong, to call affirmative action for minorities "racism in reverse," while treating affirmative action for bankers, farmers, homebuyers and white men of power as "entitlements."

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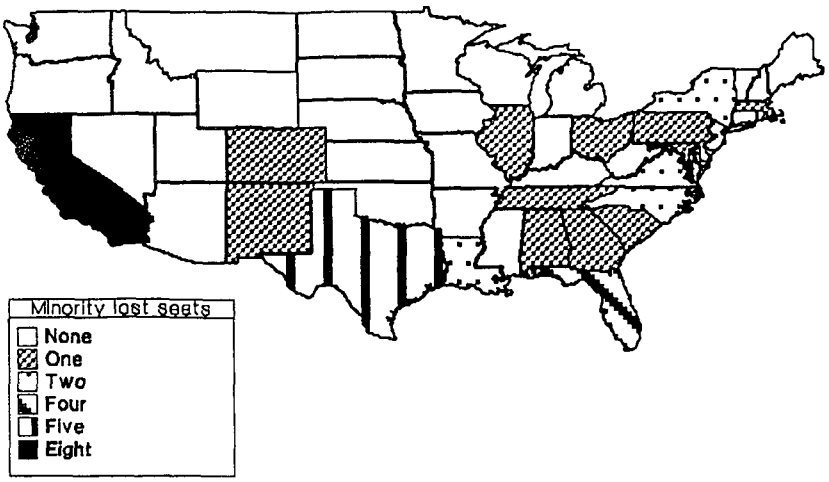

This map shows how many seats blacks and latinos have lost in the House because of the district voting system used to elect members. Voting at large with proportional representation would probably add at least 37 new minority members to the House

The safe segregation of Capitol Hill

In the midst of the debate over affirmative action, few noted that the arguments were taking place in one of America's most segregated institutions, the US Congress.

As we have pointed out before, if Congress were a school system it would be under court-ordered bussing. Being a law unto itself, it can proceed happily passing civil rights rules for the rest of the country, from which it is effectively exempt.

Only through a quirk is a black or hispanic elected to the Senate. And thanks to elections by congressional districts, each larger than any state except Virginia at the time the Constitution was written, minority representation in the House is roughly one-third what it should be.

Even when the gross disparity in the makeup of Congress is noted, it has generally been assumed that there is not much that can be done about it short of changing the Constitution. Of course, making DC a state would help, as would Senator Simon's suggestion that Guam, the Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico all be given statehood. But it would take thirteen new states, each with black or latino senators, to bring the Senate into ethnic balance.

In the House, however, there is more opportunity to rectify the imbalance than most realize. While the Constitution prescribes that representatives be apportioned among the states it does not spell out the nature of their election.

Thus nothing would prevent the passage of legislation calling for a dramatically new way of electing representatives, such as by proportional representation or doubling the size of the House to permit smaller districts that better reflect the ethnic diversity of the country.

In fact, the current system of election might not even be constitutional because it effectively disenfranchises two-thirds of America's blacks and latinos as well as other minorities. (For example, California's Asians are under-represented as well as its latinos).

Weather. . .

districts so safe they won by more than 75%. Among the recipients were Tom Foley, Les Aspin, and Charles Rangel.

While we think federal legislation ought to specify how public computer access to information generated by the product of that legislation should be made available (much as book information is provided by library computers), CRC not only fills part of the enormous gap between what should be and what is, it goes further by providing software that allows the information to be usefully used by journalists or activists. For information: CRC, 1010 Vermont Ave NW #710, DC 20005 (202-347-5400)

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Another organization that is making effective use of computers is the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse. TRAC, for example, recently used federal data records to do an intensive analysis of how US Attorney and their staffs were distributed throughout the US. TRAC found large variations in staffing per capita, even accounting for workload. For example, Vermont had three times as many US Attorneys per million as neighboring New Hampshire. Wyoming got four times as many as North Carolina. There were similar inexplicable differences in the growth of US Attorneys' offices during the Reagan years. For example, Los Angeles -- despite its importance as a drug center -- barely kept up with population growth while West Virginia was blessed with a 300% increase in staffing. The Washington office of TRAC is at 666 Pennsylvania Ave SE #303, DC 20003 (202-544-8722).

■

The speaker of the Tennessee House of Representatives has banned liquor on the house floor, as well as popcorn and paperwad fights, pizza parties and naps.

■

Douglas Wilder is being touted by the Vichy Democrats and their media cronies, but Virginia voters have a lower opinion. A Mason-Dixon Opinion Research poll taken the beginning of May found that

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This raises the interesting possibility of a voting rights suit against the Congress. Courts have shown a willingness to intervene in local elections to make voting systems more fair. They could do the same with the House. Montana, for example, is currently in federal court arguing that its loss of one seat leaves it with a single at-large district 40% larger than the average ideal district.

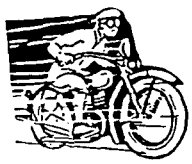
The map on the previous page shows just how bad the current situation is. It shows the states that currently discriminate against blacks and hispanics. It is based on 1990 census data and the composition of the 1990 House of Representatives. While it is true that the 1990 House was not required to reflect the 1990 census, a fair election system should follow changes in the population. Further, a comparison with 1980 census data finds that the disparities were almost as great (a net loss of 34 seats using 1980 figures as opposed to 37 using 1990).

The map assumes, for purposes of exploratory calculation, that voters in each state elected their representatives at-large using some system of proportional representation and that minority candidates were elected in proportion to their population. All percentages were rounded down, so if -- as in the case of Alabama -- blacks should theoretically get 1.83 seats, they would get only one.

If such a plan were followed, black/hispanic representation in the House could more than double, although still fall about five percentage points short of the actual proportion of these minorities in the general population.

The map shows that the biggest current offenders are California, Texas and Florida, but that more than a dozen other states fall short as well. After the 1992 election, you can use this map to see how effective redistricting was in correcting ethnic inequities.

We also calculated the results assuming that the size of the House was doubled. Creating smaller districts would make for better ethnic representation, although it can not be calculated because of the political nature of redistricting. If, however, we switched to at-large elections with proportional representation, and we doubled the size of the House, there could be about a two percentage point improvement in the representation of blacks and hispanics. Further, a number of states -- Arizona, Arkansas, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Washington, and Wisconsin -- would theoretically add minorities to their currently homogeneous delegations. -- s.s.



20th Century Translations

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive societal activities bears no necessary correlation to, and exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with, innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account. -- *Historian Forrest McDonald, as part of an argument for "short, homely words" in Chronicles magazine.*

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all -- *Ecclesiastes*

I'm not quite old enough to remember it -- only kidding -- but I think it was around 87 some years ago (have to be kinda careful ever since I got the day of Pearl Harbor wrong) that our fathers threw out the first pitch for liberty, started a whole new democratic ball game on this continent, dedicated, as it was to the all-men-are-equal thing.Now we -- caught up in this brother against brother -- tremendous violence and bloodshed -- we're -- team-mate against team-mate, all this kind of thing -- we're putting the Liberty experiment, that new, experimental kind of nation -- unprecedented -- we're putting that through the wringer. -- *British journalist John Lichfield emulating the Bush literary style.*

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nations, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged *ina great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. -- *Abraham Lincoln*

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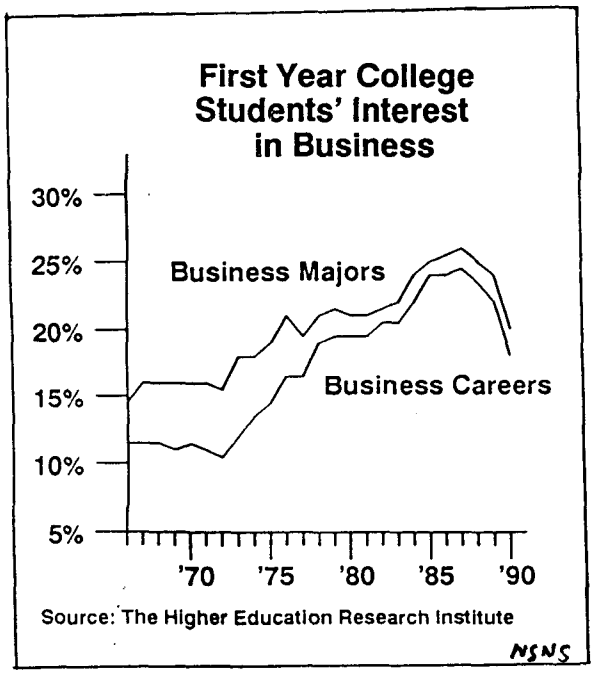
61% of that state's voters thought their ambitious governor was doing only a fair or poor job.

In 1974, Turkey occupied Northern Cyprus at the cost of 3000 lives. In 1975, Indonesia annexed East Timor, with 100,000 deaths. In 1975, Morocco annexed Western Sahara. Cost: 5,000 lives. In 1982, Israel occupied Southern Lebanon at the cost of 20,000 lives. Extra!, the newsletter of the media watchdog FAIR, reports that in the first month of these acts of naked aggression the New York Times wrote between 2 and 6 editorials. When Iraq annexed Kuwait at the cost of 700 lives, it wrote 23.

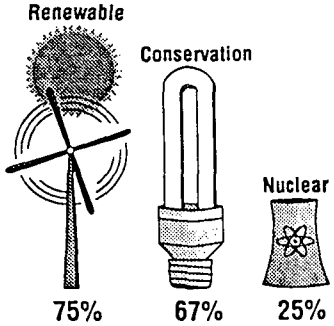


Road Signs

■ America now how has more people in prison per capita than even the Soviet Union or South Africa. Nonetheless, in 1990 murders, rapes, robberies and assaults hit record highs in the US last year.

■ The Washington Times reports that one of the most popular books to steal from DC's bookstores is the Bible. One Christian bookstore has taken to putting Bibles out of harm's way behind the checkout counter. Said the owner, "I guess people don't have a lot of reverence for the word of God." The manager of B. Dalton Bookseller at the Shops at National Place has had so many Bibles stolen that she has asked her distributor to stop sending them for the time being.

In a December 1990 national poll, a vast majority of Americans ranked renewable energy and conservation as their #1 or #2 priority for government funding (75% and 67%). Nuclear power ranked last (25%).



Sources: Research/Strategy/Management, Greenberg-Lake: The Analysis Group
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■ According to Margaret Carlisle Duncan in Extra!, sports commentators covering the 1989 US Open finals in tennis used men's last names 70% of the time when describing the play, but used women's first names 53% of the time.

■ If it's any comfort, George Bush and William Casey may not be that off the national norm. A national survey used as the basis for the new book *The Day America Told the Truth* found that 91% of the respondents said they lied regularly, both at home and at work. The survey came up with other cheery news:

- Most workers admit to goofing off about seven hours a week
- Twenty percent of women say they have been date raped.
- 72% of respondents don't know their next door neighbor.
- Only 13% believe in all ten commandments.

■ According to a United Nations study, the US ranks only 13th in human freedoms based on 40 criteria. Sweden comes in first, followed by Denmark and the Netherlands. The US loses points for the death penalty and the prevalence of rape.

Role Models

Dan Quayle, who refused an honorary membership in the *Gilligan's Island* Fan Club, citing "ethical constraints." Club officials can't figure out what he's talking about. Another recent high point in the vice presidency came when *Harper's* asked Quayle how many requests he got this year to be a commencement speaker. Quayle refused to respond for "security reasons." *Harper's* is planning a freedom of information action.

Doug Wilder, who shortly before leaving on a European trade mission to promote Virginia tobacco, made an appearance on the steps of his state capitol at an anti-smoking rally.

John Sununu, a leader in Bush's quota-bashing, who is described in Bob Woodward's new book as having told Richard Cheney that he wanted 30% of the remaining 42 top jobs at Defense filled by women or minorities.

The Houston police, which has been out polling the homeless, asking which crimes they are most likely to commit.

The Miami Beach police, which is planning to notify employers when a worker is arrested on a drug charge. The police say they won't

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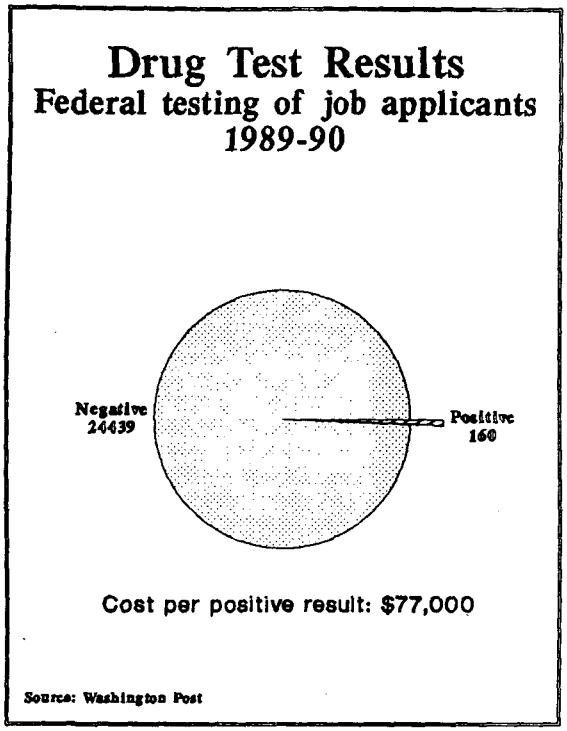

send the letter if the arrestee agrees to enter a drug program. Even those found not to have a drug problem would be required to be periodically tested. Local civil liberties groups plan a court test as soon as the first letter is sent.

Field notes...

Defense budget: The Center for Defense Information figures that the US could safely cut its defense budget to $200 billion by 1995. It also points out that continued arm sales actually increases the likelihood of US involvement in third world conflicts. *For a copy of the report send $1 to CDI, 1500 Mass Ave NW, DC 20005.*

AIDS Hotline: The John Hopkins AIDS Service has established a hotline for those wishing the latest information about studies of drugs used to treat people infected with HIV-1. *The number is 301-955-4345 and is open 24 hours a day.*

Co-Op America Spring Catalog: This unique catalog of socially responsible items started as a small insert in 1981, now grosses $1 million a year with its products from children in Afghanistan, Blackfeet Indians, Amazon foresters, villagers of Nepal, Harlem artists, Mexican coffee growers and lots more. *For a copy call 800-424-2667.*

Democrats 2000: This is a coalition of progressive and populist Democrats which is working on national health care and other important issues the mainstream Democrats can't seem to find. *[1311 L St NW #300, DC 20005. 202-626-5620]*

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